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Luciana Ranelli '14 Looks to El Paso

Summary: The biology and secondary education major is preparing to student teach in El Paso's Ysleta Independent School District.

(December 13, 2013)-University of Minnesota, Morris student Luciana Ranelli '14, Duluth, is preparing to student teach at Eastwood High School in El Paso's Ysleta Independent School District next semester. Having completed her preliminary coursework, the accomplished biology and secondary education student is looking forward to teaching in and exploring an unfamiliar city.

Looking for a "different, broadening experience" outside of Minnesota, Ranelli chose the Ysleta district from among those with which the Division of Education has established working partnerships. After completing fall practicum in Willmar, she hoped to again work in a new and diverse community.

"There's a lot of learning that comes from listening to new folks in a different place with different backgrounds and stories, and I want to make active choices that put me there," says Ranelli. "It's important for me to know how another school system works. I will be a better teacher and advocate for education if I have these experiences."

Ranelli has already taken part in a wide variety of co-curricular and research activities like the Morris Campus Student Association, Symphonic Winds, Morris Academic Partnership program, and a National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates at the Rocky Mountain Biological Lab. She is also a recipient of the [2011 Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity \(SEED\) Award](#). As she prepares to enter the next phase of her education, she trusts that these experiences have prepared her to become a versatile member of Eastwood's teaching faculty.

While Ranelli admits to feeling slightly nervous in the face of this new challenge, her undergraduate mentors are confident in her abilities. Margaret Kuchenreuther, associate professor of biology, writes, "She has taken full advantage of all that a liberal arts education has to offer, and this excellent academic preparation, combined with her keen mind, natural curiosity, and sparkling personality position her to become a highly successful teacher and scholar."

Judy Kuechle, associate professor of education, adds that Ranelli "shines as a classroom teacher...as she weaves a story into her instruction and draws the students into a discussion, her eyes sparkle and a smile crosses her face because she knows her students are right with her in the learning process."

While she is focused on the present, Ranelli has a number of goals she hopes to accomplish in the months following her tenure at Eastwood. She plans to pursue career opportunities in and beyond traditional classroom settings next fall and has applied for a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Spain. Her long-term plans include graduate school and, of course, teaching in some capacity.

"Having broad experience in biology and education leaves a lot of doors open," says Ranelli. "It's good to have this many options. It can make decisions harder, but also more meaningful. It makes me think about what I really want to be

doing.”

Ranelli will be in El Paso from early January until late March. She will graduate from Morris in May 2014 with a degree in biology and licensure to teach middle school science and high school biology.

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